

Nearly Christmas

Dearly beloved Sisters, Brothers and young people,

For many of us, these are busy weeks—at school, at work, with family, and in our communities. Perhaps you will find a moment to read this letter sometime during these days. It was written especially for you, young and old. I hope that reading it will give you the opportunity to prepare for Christmas and provide space to reflect on what you want to set in motion within yourself on this day. Because a weekly letter is also a personal letter, I want to share how I do that myself..

In these dark days (in the Netherlands), I could well use some extra light. Having a Christmas tree at home makes it cosy. But this year, I do not just want to see the light: I want to actively nourish being a carrier and bringer of light. The text of the Christmas Dedication¹ helps me with that. The questions that it poses make me think: how does what is written here apply to me? And they raise questions of their own. I have placed them on Post-it notes next to the text. That way, the text becomes even more my own.

In the text about the attitude that Jesus exemplified for us and in which Bishop Budde calls us to be courageous ourselves, I wrote: *Where do I need to take concrete steps to radically, generously, and courageously choose for people and for love?* In the song 'Closer to You, My Soul,' which says that selfishness translates into loyalty, I wondered: *When am I selfish?* And in the question: *How do I keep my heart soft?* I added: *And in what ways can my heart soften again?*

At Christmas, a vulnerable child was born. Totally dependent. Just as we all once were, and as we essentially always will be.

*Man is a soft machine,
a flexible column with holes
full of delicate wires
and tubes that serve
nothing but tenderness
and to be warmer than air²*

Perhaps Christmas does not help us find answers, but rather allows us to ask questions that make us more human. I continue to seek out that tender vulnerability by questioning myself and opening myself to whatever new thoughts might arise. So that belief in new possibilities can be born within me again.

I wish for you, young and old,— in everything life offers and in everything it asks of you —moments of peace. Moments in which you nourish the light, in which hope can shine, and in which you find the gentle courage to begin again. How wonderful it would be if that trust could find you and me, and we feel invited to give the world the person who we truly want to be. So that *peace on earth, and goodwill toward people*, is not just a prayer, but something that we are fully committed to together.

With my warm-hearted greeting, gladly your sister,

Nanda Ziere



¹ See apgen.nl/kerstwijding (Christmas Dedication) and the booklet that will be sent with the December edition of The Current.

² Leo Vroman, part of the poem Mens (Human), *Gedichten (Poems) 1946-1984*, Querido